

2024

SoIN Tourism

Sales & Marketing Plan

The "SMarketing" Plan



Introduction

Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

As 2024 approaches, SoIN Tourism will monitor economic forecasts amidst concerns of a recession. Our post-pandemic progress is encouraging, and we see promising developments that give us confidence in our community's future.

One of SoIN Tourism's key objectives is to refine our branding. Research in 2023 showed our destination's brand is making inroads in our target markets. Further market research and creative development will refine our messaging to capture more awareness.

Locally, we aim to establish more effective communication with elected officials and their communicators. Our goal is to continue conversations about tourism's positive impact on the economy, seeking community-based development that keep each city vibrant, livable and magnetic to visitors.

A new initiative in 2024 will be the opening of a new Visitor Center in an area with high foot traffic. The center and the programming within it will be designed to engage visitors and enhance their stay in the destination. Other areas of focus include continuing momentum in our destination's earned media coverage, driving visitors to our tourism partners' businesses, and securing leads and visits in the group tour market. Our dedication to welcoming diverse visitors by engaging with diverse residents will manifest in the inclusive stories we tell.

This 2024 Sales and Marketing Plan will be our road map for driving visitation to Clark and Floyd counties. We are excited to collaborate with community partners and businesses. Together we will elevate our region and shape the destination's future by introducing visitors to our charming locales.

Sincerely,



Chief Marketing Officer



The SoIN Brand Story

A destination brand is not a slogan or an ad campaign. It is the sum of the history, character and culture of the people within the destination. Visitor experiences in SoIN reflect the area's communities and their people. We are:

- Open & Unpretentious
- Bustling, yet Friendly
- Down-to-earth
- Neighborly & Easy Going
- Low Hassle
- Good Value, Affordable



**SWEET
SPOT**



*We're in the Sweet Spot
between City and Country.*

Our Messaging is Organized Around

SoIN's Brand Pillars

Brand pillars are characteristics that make our area distinctive, unique and attractive. We lead with these attributes to tell the SoIN story. Through research and visitors' reactions to our destination marketing, we find that visitors value these pillars.

Riverside/ Waterfront



Ohio River scenery
Riverside dining and recreation
390 million year old fossils
River history

Outdoor Recreation



Rolling hills, atypical Midwest topography
Farm experiences
Knobstone Trail, the Midwest's Appalachian trail

Culinary



Eclectic, entrepreneurial restaurant scene
Craft beer, wine and spirits

History & Heritage



Lewis & Clark and the Corps of Discovery
Steamboat history
African American History
the Underground Railroad & the Network to Freedom

Arts & Culture



Immersive arts experiences
Maker culture
Storyed performing arts

Guiding Principles

Destination Marketing Benefits SoIN

Destination marketing is a vital community function. It attracts visitors who inject money into the local economy and enhances our quality of place. SoIN Tourism performs a public good benefiting local people in Clark and Floyd.

Vital Partnerships

Our tourism partners deliver experiences to visitors, and we can't market without them. We create opportunities to collaborate with partners; we share their stories. We are open to mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses who wish to enhance the local visitor experience.

Monitoring COVID-19

SoIN Tourism will continue to be mindful of COVID levels and will market responsibly.

Regionalism Benefits All

The SoIN visitor industry maintains a symbiotic relationship with Louisville's. Our ability to attract visitors relies on our proximity to Louisville, and Louisville tourism benefits from our offerings.

GoSoIN.com as a Hub

Our website serves as our front doorstep, inviting visitors to explore SoIN's offerings and plan a stay. It is the hub of our communications.

Marketing through Storytelling

We use video, photographic and written storytelling to make authentic connections with consumers. We include diverse voices to represent our community accurately and to convey that all are welcome.

Tourism's Economic Impact*



Total local workers**
supported by tourism:

5,715

**Full or part-time jobs



11 Cents

of each visitor dollar went toward the
payment of state and local taxes.



If tourism did not exist, each of the
76,554 families in Clark-Floyd
would have to pay an additional **\$601**
per year in taxes to maintain current levels
of state & local government services.



56 Cents

of every dollar spent by visitors to Clark-Floyd
counties is returned to the local area.

*Source: Rockport Analytics, LLC, 2021

SWOT Analysis

In preparing the 2024 Sales and Marketing Plan, SoIN Tourism conducted a SWOT analysis assessing the current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the destination.

Strengths

- As a data-driven, accountable, transparent organization, SoIN Tourism engages with the community and shares its plans and reports
- Marketing campaigns reaching new audiences
- SoIN Tourism is a visible presence in the community
- SoIN Tourism's staff's relationships, networking and history; community's improved perception of the SoIN team
- Engaging more tourism industry partners with innovative initiatives

Weaknesses

- More people know about SoIN, but it is still not a household name
- Business travel (meetings, etc.) continues to lag
- Limited capacity meetings and sports facilities leads to lost business
- Staff capacity compared to workload continues to challenge the organization's resources.
- Turnover of travel counselors – expand roles to be more beneficial to staff and the community
- Lack of perceived diversity in the destination

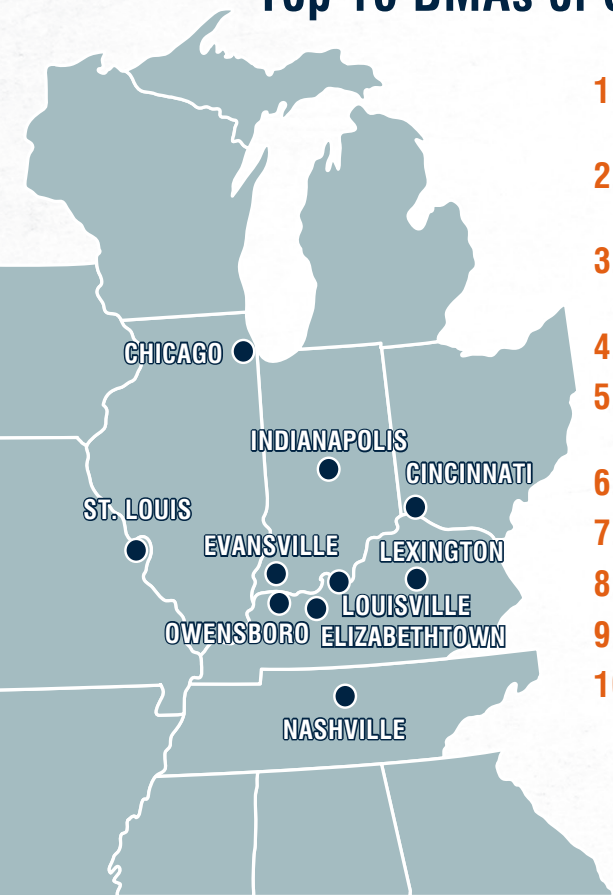
Opportunities

- Opening a new Visitor Center location presents a chance for fresh, renewed consumer, resident, community, and partner engagement
- Encourage partners to use SoIN Tourism's marketing expertise and resources
- Enhance education and awareness of tourism's contribution to the local economy
- Travel Alliance Partners industry show ("TAP Dance") to be hosted in SoIN
- Encourage collaboration between area tourism and hospitality partners
- Provide SoIN Tourism board members with tools to act as ambassadors
- Capitalize on READI initiative prospects and other SoIN developments (Clarksville South, READI projects, other communities)
- Engage residents and visitors with SoIN Tourism's presence at regional and local events
- Advance Conference Center project in partnership with Town of Clarksville
- Elevate, promote current and future outdoor recreation assets (Origin Park, Ohio River Greenway, South Monon, etc.)
- Increase tourism funding with 2024 passage of Tourism Improvement District legislation
- Emphasize niche experiences in marketing campaigns

Threats

- Competition among communities creates fewer opportunities, it leads to a tribal culture, which makes inefficient use of our resources
- Continuing workforce and labor shortages
- Fragmented media
- Political landscape creates negative perception of the state
- Potential for resurgence of Covid variants
- 80/20 rule exists within partner engagement; need broader engagement of partners with SoIN Tourism
- Hoosier humility and authenticity conflict with some residents' push-back against change; balance of humility vs. pride of place
- Lack of diversity in the types of SoIN's small businesses

Top 10 DMAs of Origin*



1. Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI
2. Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN
3. Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN
4. Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN
5. Kentucky nonmetropolitan area
6. Evansville, IN-KY
7. Lexington-Fayette, KY
8. Atlanta, GA
9. St. Louis, MO
10. Owensboro, KY

Visitor Information



Day Trips

Avg. Length of Stay

7.2 hours



Overnight Visits

Avg. Length of Stay

55.2 hours

**Source: Symphony, Near, 2022-2023*

SoIN Visitor Data

Target Markets

we target

Regional Visitors (drive market)

Louisville & Southern Indiana residents who are involved in clubs, associations and sport leagues

Louisville & Southern Indiana residents

Motorcoach tour operators

Event owners, rights-holders and organizers

because they

are more likely to stay overnight and spend more.

are our best way to reach meeting, event and tournament planners.

they support local businesses and are "brand ambassadors" who influence visiting friends and relatives to engage with our partners.

deliver busloads of visitors.

deliver individuals, couples, and groups on weekends.

Personas

To shape messages effectively and influence decision making, it's helpful to think of customers as individuals who have a lifestyle – or travel style – and with needs that our destination can meet.



Michelle Mom

The family travel planner, has kids in sports, family recreation
With affordable, kid-friendly activities and great opportunities to get outdoors, SoIN is an ideal place for family fun with easy access to Louisville.



Friend Trips - Drew Brew/Gloria Girlfriend

Girls' trip planner, relaxing getaway, entertainment with friends
Guys' trip planner, active getaway, entertainment with friends
With convenient hotels, a diverse live music scene, a nearby casino, six golf courses and craft breweries, SoIN offers easy getaways with plenty of fun.



Couples - Clyde & Connie/Terry & Morgan

Weekend getaway, one-day excursion, evening out
Always up for something different, Clyde and Connie Couple will find SoIN an unexplored and unexpected source of culture, cuisine and a way to "get away" without going far.

Traveling LGBTQ+ couples seek the chance to explore new areas, talk to interesting people, shop for one-of-a-kind items, and discover culinary options to tempt the palate.
SoIN offers walkable downtowns that welcome couples and friends of all stripes with its easygoing, accepting attitude. A wide variety of dining options allow travelers to experience local and regional flavors.



Tom/Tess Tour Operator

Group tour planner, may own buses
SoIN gives Tom and Tess affordable options to build unique tours that can stand alone or complement a Louisville itinerary.

Partner Support

SoIN Tourism doesn't own our destination's attractions, restaurants, or hotels, nor do we operate the festivals held here. Our partners deliver those experiences to people who visit and live in Clark and Floyd counties.

As a destination marketing organization, we promote the visitor experiences our partners offer. We strengthen our community by helping partners reach new audiences and by collaborating to create new opportunities. We share our partners' stories in our marketing and messaging. In turn, we attract visitors to our destination; they can experience SoIN through the businesses that make up our destination.

Objectives

- 1. Be the go-to marketing resource for tourism businesses who want to increase their knowledge; help partners implement proven techniques into their marketing plans.**
- 2. Engage tourism and hospitality business owners to build strong partnerships with SoIN Tourism along with other local partners to create win-win relationships and further strengthen SoIN.**

Goals

- 1.** Drive ticket sales, overnight bookings, attraction attendance, and other sales for partners within SoIN by increased cooperative marketing participation.
- 2.** Increased programs to drive customers to partners' businesses.
- 3.** Grow Team SoIN attendance by 5%.
- 4.** Engage with visitors by having the Mobile Visitor Center present at partners' high-traffic attractions and events.
- 5.** Provide cooperative marketing to increase awareness of partners' businesses.

Partner Resources and Opportunities



SoIN Tourism Partnerships

- Upload content to SoIN Tourism's website to share stories to a wider audience
- Dollar for dollar match for cooperative marketing
- Connect partners to journalists who tell destination stories



Team SoIN Industry Meetings

- Provide networking meetings throughout the year
- Encourage and facilitate partnerships
- Share marketing tips and resources



SoIN Visitor Guide

- Provide engaging stories through the organization's Visitor Guide
- Distribute to SoIN's target markets



Group Tour Efforts

- Sell destination at travel trade shows
- Advise partners on product development for groups
- Affordable turnkey group marketing solutions
- Include appropriate partners in familiarization tours and site visits



Provide Visitor Services and Tell Partners' Stories

- Engage visitors at select events via Mobile Visitor Center
- Spotlight partners at Visitor and Welcome Centers
 - » Locally made products
 - » Provide brochure rack opportunities
 - » Consumer outreach through travel shows

Leisure Travel

When asked why they visit SoIN, many people say they are visiting family and friends. SoIN Tourism reinforces the destination's brand to residents, who spend the most time here. They can be ambassadors for our destination, as they share their experiences with family members and friends who visit from other cities. We market our brand through owned, shared, earned and paid platforms, which include our website, email newsletters, social media, advertising, and outreach at local and regional events. We encourage locals and visitors to engage with us in these channels to expand our reach. SoIN Tourism seeks to penetrate other regional markets, encourage out-of-town visitors to visit and experience our destination.

Objective

Establish in the minds of potential visitors that Southern Indiana's lodging, attractions, events, dining, and retail are desirable options for a weekend getaway destination by itself or to complement the Louisville visitor experience. Emphasize the destination's unique brand pillars.

Goals

1. Establish a baseline of engaged users who visit our website; aim to increase this year over year by 10% (new GA4 metrics as of 8/1/23)
2. Host 12-16 travel writers/content creators on either individual or group familiarization tours
3. Engage more than 2,500 people in SoIN passport programs
4. Increase email marketing subscribers by 10% while exceeding industry average for open and click-through rates

Key Strategies

- A. Expand media coverage by targeting journalists from diverse perspectives who generate stories about the SoIN experience as a welcoming, accessible destination.
- B. Using compelling storytelling and integrated marketing campaigns, engage potential visitors, attract them to our website and provide clear calls to action for visiting the destination.
- C. Design and develop new Visitor Center programs to make it a must-visit destination for visitors and residents.
- D. Focused digital marketing with targeted audiences to enhance brand recognition.
- E. Develop scoring system to measure outcomes generated through media placements.

Sales and Destination Services

Whether it's by a themed motorcoach tour, an industry meeting, a sports tournament or an event, SoIN Tourism's Sales and Destination Services team strives to help key decision makers choose the area as a destination for group business.

SoIN Tourism's creative product development, packaging, and itinerary building has raised awareness of the SoIN brand among influencers in the group market. The team fosters strong relationships in collaborative projects among regional partners to strengthen offerings in these ever-changing markets. The team generates leads, services clients, offers site visits and hosts potential customers on familiarization tours to motivate people to choose SoIN for their group's destination.

Since SoIN lacks dedicated conference facilities, the area is a good fit for the "SMERF" market (social, military, educational, religious, and fraternal meetings). In addition, events such as Abbey Road on the River work well here.

Objectives

- 1. Establish SoIN as a must-visit destination for group tours, meetings, events and sports by itself or combined with other surrounding destinations.**
- 2. Achieve greater partner engagement and encourage collaboration among partners throughout the counties.**
- 3. Establish SoIN in the minds of potential customers that our lodging, attraction, dining and retail options offer authentic experiences by themselves or as part of the essential Louisville experience.**
- 4. Develop awareness of regional meeting opportunities among residents involved in business, association, religious, fraternal, or affinity organizations and assist in appropriate bid requests.**

Goals

- 1.** Connect with 200 Group Tour Planners (group leaders & tour operators).
- 2.** 200 Day Trips; 10 Overnight Motorcoaches
- 3.** Organize, orchestrate, and execute at least 1 familiarization tour for group tour operators.
- 4.** Plan, invite, and execute up to 2 tour operator site visits for stakeholders within the meetings, conventions, or sports markets.
- 5.** Meet with 3 qualified meeting planners and produce actual leads for development.
- 6.** Service 2 meetings and/or sports events from beginning to end.

Key Strategies

- A.** Promote the SoIN brand in marketing efforts within group influencer networks (group tour operators, meetings, and sports).
- B.** Increase the number of partners who participate in the motorcoach market by providing education and one-on-one training.
- C.** Coach partners on building attractive, interactive experiences.
- D.** Complement sales activities with targeted trade publication advertising and personalized digital content.
- E.** Work with local event planners to build their events for growth in room night revenue.
- F.** Obtain grants from the Indiana Sports Commission's Team Indiana to help lure potential sports events.
- G.** Identify other unique events like Abbey Road on the River that can shine a national spotlight on our area.
- H.** Work with local governments to encourage their participation in hosting events.
- I.** Attend One Southern Indiana events as an ambassador to help secure local meeting leads.

2023 Business Development Calendar

Date	Event	Type
Jan. 13	Chicago Travel and Adventure Show	Consumer Outreach
Jan. 13	Indianapolis AAA Showcase	Consumer Outreach
Jan. 13-16	ABA Marketplace	Travel Trade
March 1-3	Heartland Travel Showcase	Travel Trade
March 4	Indiana Media Marketplace	Media Trade Show
April 14 & 15	Circle Wisconsin	Travel Trade
May 23-27	Abbey Road on the River	Consumer Outreach
June 13 & 14	Travel Alliance Partners	Travel Trade
June 13 & 14	Midwest Travel Network	Media Trade Show
June 2-5	PRSA Travel & Tourism Conference	Media Trade Show
Aug. 9-13	Student and Youth Travel Conference	Travel Trade
TBD-Summer	Group Tour Sales Mission	Travel Trade
September	Great Day Travel Marketplace	Travel Trade
September	Louisville AAA Travel Show	Consumer Outreach
September	SATW Regional Conference	Media Trade Show
Sept. 20 - 22	Outdoor Writers Assoc. of America	Media Trade Show
October	Ohio AAA Showcase	Consumer Outreach
TBD-Fall	Group Tour Sales Mission	Travel Trade
November	National Tour Association	Travel Trade
November	Ontario Motorcoach Association	Travel Trade
Ongoing	SoIN Tourism outreach at Regional Events	Consumer Outreach

Key Performance Indicators

	Measurement		What it monitors
Earned Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of placements • Impressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentiment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness • Third party endorsement
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits (sessions) • Unique visitors • New visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average time spent on site • Bounce rate • Referrals to partner websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health of our brand • Strength of our marketing • Number of referrals to our site
Extranet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event submissions • Updated listings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead pick-ups • Special offer submissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner engagement
Email Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open rate • Click-through rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email newsletters distributed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer engagement • Partner engagement
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to digital ads/campaigns • Email addresses collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best uses for media sources based on type, editorial, circulation, and leads collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad effectiveness • Channel effectiveness
Event Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor spending levels while attending event* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Economic Impact
Event Marketing <i>(i.e. Balloon events, consumer shows, local festivals)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email addresses collected • Quality of emails collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of event/show for email collection • Number of promo code uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer engagement • Lead collection • Brand/destination awareness
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total followers • Leads generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total sign-ups for giveaways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer engagement • Partner engagement • Community engagement
Meetings, Events & Conference Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales contacts generated • Actual leads generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site inspections hosted • Lost business (estimated room nights) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead collection • Brand awareness • Business development • Health of meetings market
Meeting & Conference Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events hosted • Room nights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead collection • Brand awareness • Business development • Health of meetings market
Group Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour planner contacts generated • Potential number of visitors • Potential economic impact • Actual leads generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total overnight coaches reported • Total daytrip coaches reported • Percent of partners reporting to SoIN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead collection • Brand awareness • Business development • Health of group market
Visitor Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email addresses collected at Visitor/Welcome Centers • Visitors serviced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchandise sales • Partner referrals • Visitor interests • Visitor inquiry location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer engagement • Community engagement • Lead collection • Visitor Satisfaction • Partner engagement

*Measurement method pending in 2024.